

A labor market area is a general term used to describe an economically integrated region within which workers can readily change jobs without changing their place of residence. New Hampshire's labor market areas were last designated after the 2000 Census. Note that historical data published prior to this designation are not comparable.

Who is responsible for designating these areas?

The federal Office of Management and Budget (OMB) reviews the commuting patterns and economic dependence between counties every ten years. Effective June 2003, OMB designated Core Based Statistical Areas (CBSA) as the new standard, replacing the old standard of Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSA). According to OMB, a CBSA is a statistical geographic entity consisting of a county associated with at least one core (urbanized area or urban cluster) and having a population of at least 10,000. The CBSA must have adjacent counties that have a high degree of social and economic integration with the core as measured through commuting ties. In New England the CBSA are also defined using cities and towns or groups of cities and towns rather than counties, and are identified as New England City and Town Areas, or NECTA.

Metropolitan Areas

Metropolitan New England City and Town Areas, or MetroNECTA, are core based statistical areas associated with at least one urbanized area that has a population of at least 50,000. New Hampshire includes all or portions of three MetroNECTA; only the Manchester MetroNECTA is entirely within the state.

A MetroNECTA that contains a core with a population of at least 2.5 million may be subdivided into NECTA divisions. These NECTA divisions must contain a total population of 100,000 or more. New Hampshire includes portions of four MetroNECTA Divisions, all of which are part of the Boston-Cambridge-Quincy MA-NH MetroNECTA.

Micropolitan Areas

As of the 2000 Census, the OMB introduced a new area, the Micropolitan area or MicroNECTA. A MicroNECTA is a core based statistical area with at least one urban cluster that has a population of at least 10,000, but less than 50,000. It must also have adjacent cities and towns or groups of cities and towns that have a high degree of social and economic integration with the "core" as measured through commuting ties. New Hampshire has seven MicroNECTA, one of which is an interstate area.

Small Labor Market Areas

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), with input from this bureau, divides the cities and towns not classified as part of a NECTA into small labor market areas. Like the NECTA, Labor Market Areas were based on commuting patterns; however, population was not a direct factor. New Hampshire has thirteen small LMAs. Nine are entirely within the state's borders while four are New Hampshire portions of interstate small LMAs.

Unattached Areas

There are four towns not attached to a specific MetroNECTA, MicroNECTA, or labor market area, because the commuting patterns of their residents were not strong enough to show social and economic ties to a specific area. These towns are Deerfield, Newmarket, Northfield, and Nottingham.